

Message from Commissioner Nancy Navarretta



The month of September brings with it two very important observances of relevance to our field. National Recovery Month, which started in 1989, is a national observance held every September to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the nation's strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery in all its forms possible. At DMHAS, recovery is at the root of the services we provide in the areas of mental health treatment and substance use prevention and treatment throughout Connecticut. This month we held and participated in numerous recovery-oriented events, including the CCAR Recovery Walk in Bushnell Park, the DMHAS Women's Services Conference on Supporting and Empowering Women in Recovery, and the Upward Spiral Webinar on The Importance of Culture in Peer Support. Reflecting on my own experience coming up through the behavioral health system, I remember being drawn to emerging work at that time in recovery from complex trauma and addiction. The strength and resiliency of individuals in

the face of adversity and their ability to recover was inspiring and it was a privilege to walk alongside people as they recovered. To this very day, I remain inspired by this community.

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month is also observed in September, which gives us an opportunity to leverage the national spotlight to raise awareness of this stigmatized, and often taboo, topic. By shifting public perception, spreading hope and sharing vital information, we seek to ensure that individuals have access to the resources they need to openly discuss suicide prevention and to seek help if needed.

September also marks the end of summer and, with students returning to the back to school routine, they need our support more than ever before. Adolescence is already a confusing time without added concerns about social media, safety in schools, staying healthy, family financial security, and loss of loved ones—so we shouldn't be surprised that the rates of anxiety, depression, suicide, and other mental health conditions are on the rise. While suicide is complicated and tragic, it is also often preventable. Knowing the warning signs for suicide and how to get help can help save lives. For more information, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xVCyZ>.

As always, please feel free to reach out with thoughts, ideas, or suggestions. We sincerely appreciate your feedback!

AAPL Names Scholarship for Dr. Dike

The American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (AAPL) has named a scholarship for Charles Dike, MD, associate professor of psychiatry, to honor his many years of service to the organization. The Charles Dike Scholarship is open to underrepresented racial and ethnic groups at AAPL. Dr. Dike is a longtime member of AAPL and has served in many capacities. He also serves as co-director of the Law and Psychiatry Division in the Yale Department of Psychiatry and is Medical Director of DMHAS. Please join me in offering congratulations to Dr. Dike on this honor!

[Click here to read the full article](#)





Join us for Connecticut's Biggest Recovery Celebration and help us put a face on recovery!

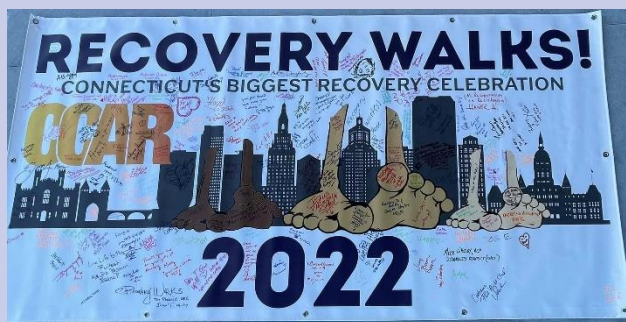


Commissioner Navarretta joins SAMHSA Assistant Secretary for Mental Health & Substance Use Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Liberation Programs Chief Recovery Officer Maggie Young, and CCAR Executive Director Phil Valentine



Maggie Young, Nancy Navarretta, Elsa Ward

Commissioner Navarretta and Director of Recovery Community Affairs, Elsa Ward, attended the 21st Annual CCAR Recovery Walk at Bushnell Park this past weekend. Billed as Connecticut's largest recovery celebration, hundreds of people in recovery from across the state participated, along with families, friends and allies. The Recovery Walk raises awareness around substance use and recovery, and amplifies the all-important messages of hope and resilience. DMHAS is honored to stand in support of CCAR and our proud recovery community here in Connecticut.



National Suicide Prevention Month: Where Connecticut Stands Two Months After the Rollout of 988

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, and it can be a stressful time of change for many people, with busy back-to-school activities and packed schedules for parents, and anxiety about shorter days and cold weather on the horizon. DMHAS held a press conference with Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz and partners at United Way of CT, Department of Children and Families, and the Charter Oak Family Center to remind the public that Connecticut's contact center for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is successfully responding to people in crisis, and is available to help. The call centers operated by United Way here in Connecticut are ranked near the top of the nation with a 98% answer rate. This ranks us 3rd in the U.S. among states answering 1000 calls or more per month.

Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, JoShonda Guerrier from the Department of Children and Families, Tanya Barrett from United Way of CT, and Steve MacHattie from Charter Oak Family Center came together at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford to underscore the vital service 988 provides while providing an update of where Connecticut stands two months after the nationwide rollout of 988. [Click here to see the entire press conference.](#)



Connecticut, nearing its Narcan distribution goal, plans to refocus on high-risk communities

DMHAS is on track to reach the goal of distributing over 45,000 Narcan kits throughout Connecticut, with the hope that meeting and exceeding this goal will significantly reduce opioid overdose fatalities. The next step will be to start targeting distribution to specific high-risk cities.

[Full story on CT Public](#)

Be a Lifeline



Do you know someone in crisis?

You can be a lifeline & help support them!

Here are five steps you can take that are known to help:

1. ASK:

Are you thinking about suicide? How do you hurt? How can I help?

2. BE THERE:

In person or on the phone. Show support. Listen. Keep promises to connect.

3. HELP KEEP THEM SAFE:

If the person in crisis is suicidal, details matter: Do they have a plan, or ideas about timing or method? You can call 988 to support their crisis care.

4. HELP THEM CONNECT:

When someone is in crisis, connecting them with ongoing supports can help establish a safety net. Remind them they can call, text or chat 988 to connect with a trained crisis counselor 24/7.

5. FOLLOW UP:

After the immediate crisis is over, check in. That text or call afterwards makes a real difference.



SOURCE: #BeThe1To @<https://www.bethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence/>

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A person in crisis is a family in crisis is a community in crisis.

You can be a lifeline. Call or text 988 or chat 988Lifeline.org if you or someone you know needs support.



SEPTEMBER IS
**SUICIDE
PREVENTION
AWARENESS
MONTH**